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ABSTRACT

This art study was conducted in the spring of 1986, during the evaluation segment of Albuquerque (New Mexico) Public Schools' (APS) 6-year curriculum planning cycle. Archival data were collected; large numbers of students, parents, teachers, and administrators were surveyed; secondary level classrooms were visited; and a review of the literature was conducted. The evaluation covered program philosophy and goals, service delivery, content, methods, materials, facilities, support, and effectiveness. Fourteen different surveys were administered in the spring of 1986 to a total of 1,499 students, 1,028 parents, 92 teachers, 4 itinerant teacher, and 89 principals from elementary, middle, and high schools in the APS. Results indicate that: (1) the amount of art education in the APS has declined at all levels in recent years; (2) offerings are not entirely standardized and provision of resources is not consistent across schools; (3) teachers expressed a desire to meet with other teachers more frequently to improve aspects of the art instruction process; (4) only 10% of secondary principals and teachers found the APS's use of community resources within its art program to be suitable; (5) most students find art programming highly enjoyable; (6) art instruction appears to be very successful in teaching students to pursue projects through their completion; and (7) the issue of written testing to assess art education achievement is a matter of dispute throughout the nation. Respondents indicated that the most crucial level of concern is the elementary art program, in which many students do not receive consistent, well-planned art instruction. (TJH)

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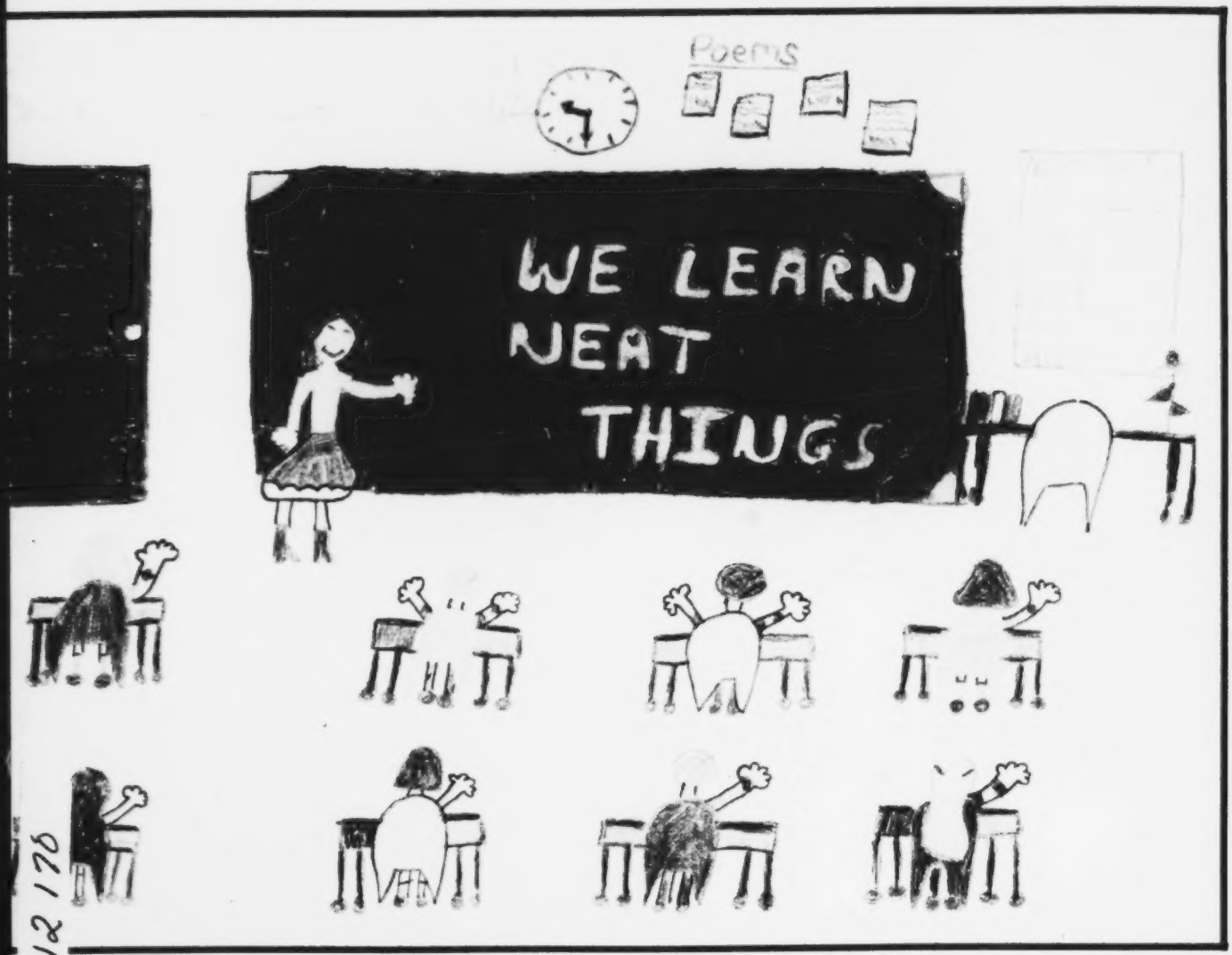

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY	i - ii
PREFACE	iii - iv
PHILOSOPHY AND GOALS	1 - 7
General Discussion	1 - 4
APS Elementary	4 - 5
APS Secondary	6 - 7
DELIVERY OF SERVICE	8 - 13
Elementary Level	8 - 9
Middle School	10 - 11
High School	12 - 13
CONTENT	14 - 18
Elementary School	14 - 15
Middle School	15, 18
High School	15 - 18
METHODS, MATERIALS, FACILITIES AND SUPPORT	19 - 34
Elementary School	19 - 26
Secondary Level	26 - 34
EFFECTIVENESS	35 - 46
Elementary School	35 - 38
Middle School	39 - 42
High School	43 - 46
CONCLUSION	47

ADMINISTRATIVE SUMMARY

This art study was conducted in the spring of 1986, during the program's evaluation segment of the Albuquerque Public Schools six-year curriculum planning cycle. Archival data were collected; large numbers of students, parents, teachers and administrators were surveyed; secondary level classrooms were visited; and a review of the literature was completed.

In recent years a transformation in the goals of art instruction has occurred, both nationally and locally. Whereas art education was often perceived as a manual or hand-eye coordination training, the current emphasis goes far beyond providing skills for the creation of art objects. The oft-cited Getty Report, produced by the Rand Corporation in 1984, appeals to educators to make dramatic changes. It proposes "discipline-based art education": balanced instruction in art criticism, art history, studio production and aesthetics. The work of Betty Edwards, and others, has furnished an additional focus: teaching art through the right brain to enhance creativity. Many APS teachers are committed to these new directions, but the districtwide approach is somewhat disparate, lacking true consistency in intent.

Art's place within the total curriculum is being reexamined in many districts. Should art be taught for its own sake or for what it can contribute to other disciplines? It appears that during the elementary school years APS is utilizing art as an occasional vehicle through which to teach the basics. It may be that art is being marketed as a pleasant "break" from the rigors of more academic subjects at the secondary level. The debate flourishes as to whether art is for all students or just those with "talent."

The amount of art education in APS has declined considerably in recent years. At the elementary level, the scarcity of instructional time and the paucity of art-trained classroom teachers are the primary explanations. Almost 90% of the elementary teacher and principal respondents registered their belief that "students should be provided with art instruction by certified art instructors." In the middle schools, the nine-week exploratory block exposes almost all students to some art, but leaves little opportunity for more in-depth elective study. At the high school level, the reduction of occasions for discretionary selection of courses has precipitated a loss of 41% of the art instructor positions over the past seven years. Only one of every four high school students enrolls in an art course.

In order to provide in-depth coverage of a wide variety of media across the district, offerings are not entirely standardized from school to school. As examples, Ceramics I and Photography II are each available at four high schools, but not at the other seven. Art professionals feel, however, that there is some uniformity, that the same concepts can be taught, regardless of the medium. Most would, nevertheless, support increased efforts toward a more uniform district scope and sequence for art, at least in terms of goals. A particularly controversial issue entails the requirement of Art I as a prerequisite to taking any upper level course in the high schools.

The provision of resources is not consistent throughout the district. At the elementary level, art itinerant teachers reach only six schools each year; many classroom teachers have little or no training in art instruction. The availability of supplies, equipment and adequate facilities also varies significantly from building to building. About one-half of the middle school personnel assessed the budget for their school's art supplies to be adequate. Fewer than one-fourth of the high school staff so signified.

During interviews and on surveys, many teachers requested the chance to meet together more frequently in an effort to improve several other features of the art instruction process as well. More than three-fourths of the teachers indicated that more opportunity for art teacher visitations to view peers in action would have a positive payoff on student learning. Only about 10% of the secondary principals and teachers find APS' use of community resources within its art program to be suitable; the others urge increased planning.

As for the effectiveness of the APS art program, it does appear that most students find the subject highly enjoyable. Only 8% of the elementary pupils, 11% of the middle school youngsters and 5% of the high school students indicated that they do not like art. In subjective ratings of the secondary program's accomplishment of twelve goals, one received the highest marks from virtually all constituencies. Respondents indicated that art instruction is very successful in teaching students to "take projects all the way from conceiving an idea through planning and production, to completion." "Growth of appreciation of art in history and culture" was judged the least fulfilled goal.

The issue of written testing to assess art education's accomplishments is a matter of dispute throughout the nation. When local art educators have had an opportunity to reach more of a consensus as to instructional goals and objectives, they will be in a better position to commit themselves to more objective accountability measures.

PREFACE

This document is unlike the curriculum evaluations that have preceded it, because the delivery system for art has become so different from other subjects. Its place in the APS course of study has decreased so dramatically in recent years that many people feel it is a misnomer to call it a "program" at either the elementary or middle school levels.

The controversial issue of written testing for art is being debated across the nation, even in school districts which emphasize art and have outstanding programs. This report will be more descriptive and process-oriented in nature than other curriculum assessments due to the difficulty in defining currently just what the APS art curriculum is, no less the difficulty in objectively measuring to what extent "it" is being learned!

The editorial in the September/October, 1986 issue of Design for Arts in Education elucidates the present concern:

> Whatever the level of disagreement in arts education, there is one point about which there can be little debate: the average American, whether parent or just taxpayer, has no idea why the serious study of art is important in elementary and secondary education. This condition has caused K-12 arts education to be sold using all sorts of rationales; literally everything from "creativity" to "improved performance in other subjects" has been tried. . . . the arts education community is perpetually trying to promote something it can't rationalize by selling benefits it also can't define in terms the public understands or believes.

This report will attempt to clarify the local perspective as well as to highlight current program strengths and weaknesses.

Fourteen different survey forms were administered during the spring of 1986. The following table presents the response rates for each population.

Response Rates for Art Evaluation Surveys
Numbers and Percentages of Surveys Returned

	Elementary	Middle School	High School
Students	643 (86% of sample 5th grade classrooms)	414 (83% of sample classes)	230 Art I (100% of sample classes) 212 Upper Level (100% of sample classes)
Parents	295 (30% of sample)	236 (24% of sample)	497 (25% of sample)
Teachers	47 (62% of 5th grade sample)	20 (80% of population)	25 (96% of population)
Itinerant Teachers	4 (67% of population)	NA	NA
Principals	50 (68% of population)	20 (43% of population)	19 (44% of population)

Student, teacher and principal replies may be considered reasonably representative. While the response rate for the parents is not large enough to register it statistically typical, the return is similar to most other district surveying. It may be more indicative of the views of those parents feeling strongly enough to want to reply.

In addition, the evaluator visited half of the middle school art rooms and all of the high school sites, observing and talking with students and teachers. A review of the literature in this field was also conducted.

Elementary and secondary level advisory groups convened on several occasions to guide the effort. The elementary group was composed primarily of "regular" classroom teachers, who teach the whole gamut of subjects throughout the day. The secondary committee was an especially dedicated lot of art teachers, often meeting well beyond the scheduled hours.

Philosophy and Goals

General Discussion

> "The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing and arithmetic."
>
> William J. Bennett, U.S. Secretary of Education
> A Report on Elementary Education in America
> (Sept., 1986)

To which part of the student is the Albuquerque Public Schools art program directed? Depending on with whom one talks, it might be concluded that it is the hands, that art is primarily a developing of manual skills; or that it's the eyes, that increased visual perception is the focus; or that it's the mind, that art is one discipline through which the latent potential and creativity of the right brain can be tapped. The truth is, of course, that art can and does have all these functions. The problem is that there is a dearth of knowledge among most of us, outside of art, as to art's educational possibilities and a disconcerting lack of consensus among the art teachers, themselves, as to where the priorities should lie.

As Fred Lazarus states in the November/December, 1985 issue of Design For Arts in Education: "The decisions that are reducing the state of the arts in our schools are being made by non-arts people. They will change their minds only if they are convinced." In the case of the visual arts, the general public has not only not been convinced of the need for more art instruction, it has not even been well-oriented to the argumentation justifying such an assertion. Many people's image of art education stems from their own exposure to art and from the art "products" they have made or viewed. Understandably, they view art as a pleasant diversion from the rigors of the "more academic subjects." Art is often perceived as a relatively constructive pastime which might have some avocational value, although many adults say they no longer apply their art skills because the prime discovery during their art education was that they were not "talented." This is due to an "art maker" concept which holds that art is for training artists, rather than for making all students better consumers and more appreciative of art.

In a series of visits to APS art programs, the evaluator, relatively untrained in art, slowly discerned the range and breadth of what art has to offer. Art teachers are able to explain their vision to others, but the argument requires further articulation and dissemination. A leading art educator who is getting the message across is Betty Edwards, Professor of Art at California State University, Long Beach. Her presentations and her first book, Drawing On the Right Side of the Brain, demonstrate that any individual capable of learning the three Rs can also learn to draw well. Since establishing a center for promoting educational applications of brain-hemisphere research, the BRAIN/ED Center, she has published Drawing On the Artist Within. This volume explains how art can be used as a vehicle to free the creative energies of the right brain. She delineates the process on page xiii of the introduction: "in learning how to draw, I believe you will learn how to see differently. And that, in turn, will enhance your powers of creative thought." Several APS art teachers, without benefit of further training, are employing the methods in Betty Edwards' books with exciting results. Asked what aspect of the art program was most preferred, a middle school student from one such school replied, "I like to put my mind to work with art."

The Rand Corporation published a major study of art education in December, 1984, looking at seven selected school districts in depth. Prepared for the Getty Center for Education in the Arts, the work has become infamous as "The Getty Report." In the Executive Summary, the authors insist,

> People at all levels will have to alter their assumptions about the value of art, its place in the curriculum and how it should be taught. Until this happens, substantive art education will not have the broad support needed to make such a tremendous change.

What kind of program should be sought according to the Getty Report? The researchers call for discipline-based art education, "substantive art programs that provide balanced, sequential instruction in four domains: art criticism, art history, studio production and aesthetics." They place a heavy emphasis on "balanced," noting that most districts currently focus almost exclusively on production.

Some art educators insist on the purity of art for its own sake, while others feel that art should complement the rest of the public school curriculum. In an article entitled "How Important Is Arts Education?" in the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) Bulletin (January, 1980), one administrator is quoted as saying, "the major issue today is how well it helps develop the basics--this is the key to funding an art program." The same article includes survey results in which 93% of the principals polled agree that "the arts may increase learning in other subjects." One could cite an abundance of sources as evidence that art instruction advances learning in the other subjects. In the interest of time and space, the reader is referred to "The Role of Fine Arts Education in the Development of Higher Level Thinking Skills," a document produced by the Houston Independent School District which serves as a compendium of evaluation studies having to do with the arts. To cite just one of its examples,

> In Eugene, Oregon, children in the arts magnet school spend less than half the time on the three R's as children in more traditional schools in the same district. Yet, compared in 1976 with the other twenty-nine schools, Magnet Arts' sixth grade tied for first place in reading and fifth place in math.

In an Albuquerque Journal Commentary on April 6, 1986, Professor Fred Sturm of the University of New Mexico writes, "Perhaps the most important skill which a good background in the arts strengthens is the ability to solve problems creatively, a fundamental requirement for successful work in the sciences."

This is fundamentally the same point made by a university administrator in Texas to Jim Arnholz (in his column upon Georgia O'Keeffe's death):

> The exercise of translating something from reality to an art form is a thought process. That's what's missing from education. If we end up with kids who can perform mechanically, but not know how to get from A to B, we're in trouble. Art is an exercise in learning how to get from A to B.

As the New York Times News Service brought to our attention on April 25, 1986, even medical schools are restoring art to their curricula. As one program initiator expounded, "Art is a way of seeing and so much of the medical encounter is based upon keen observation and a critical eye."

What are presently the stated goals for art in APS? The following section describes printed goals. Curriculum guides are currently being revised for all three levels.

The Elementary Curriculum Art Guide for Classroom Teachers, K-5, written in 1982, lists 39 goals and objectives. Ten are in the affective domain; the rest are cognitive. The highlighted features are the development of emotional and sensory perceptions.

The APS Middle School Arts and Crafts Curriculum Guide, also drafted in 1982, emphasizes enhancement of emotional and sensory perceptions as well. An officer from the New Mexico Juvenile Detention Center made a special plea that the emotional benefits of art programs not be understated. She professed that art experiences are the best chance that troubled youth have to achieve and to evolve positive self-images. While the development of art appreciation and cultural awareness and the understanding of art's place in all aspects of life, including occupations, are mentioned in the elementary document, they are given more accentuation in the middle school guide. In view of the fact that most middle school students get only the exploratory arts exposure, it is questionable whether such lofty goals can be fulfilled within the nine-week offering. This issue will be addressed in greater detail later in this report.

In lieu of a curriculum guide for art at the high school level, there are course outlines for each offering. Since many students' exposure is limited to Art I at the high school level, it may prove insightful to examine the objectives for the introductory (and often culminating) course:

District Objectives for Art I

Students will:

1. Develop eye-hand coordination.
2. Develop basic knowledge of design and the art process.
3. Develop an awareness for craftsmanship.
4. Know and use the nomenclature of tools and materials used in projects assigned in the course.
5. Demonstrate historical awareness to areas studied (drawing, painting, textiles, ceramics, design, etc.).
6. Participate in art exhibits.

The New Mexico State Department of Education's expected competencies to be derived from art instruction in the public schools are listed below:

School Exit Competencies - Visual Arts

1. Create art.
2. Exhibit sensory awareness and problem solving abilities through art.
3. Respond to art and make aesthetic judgments.
4. Experience historical and cultural art.
5. Appreciate and practice the visual arts independently.

It should be noted that #1, #3 and #4 reinforce the main points of the Getty Report.

APS Elementary

It is important to go beyond what has been written in the past to discover what the various constituencies are saying now about art's place in the curriculum. Samples of elementary students, their parents, and fifth grade teachers, as well as all elementary principals, were polled as to their perceptions. With slight variations in wording, all groups responded to the following two items:

	Percent Agreeing			
	Parents	Students	Teachers	Principals
Art education is an important part of the elementary school instruction program.	94%	90%	62%	84%
Art education is as important as the basics.	56%	61%	78%	90%

The first statement was actually worded "the art program is viewed by school personnel as an important part of the curriculum" for the latter two groups. The somewhat lower percentages for teachers and principals were attributed to the supposition by some that since resources and time outlays were being limited that this might influence their perceptions. It appears, nevertheless, that while all groups are basically in accord over the importance of art education at the elementary level, large numbers of parents and students are somewhat less committed to art's relative stature compared to the basics.

Elementary teachers and principals were also asked about the curriculum guide:

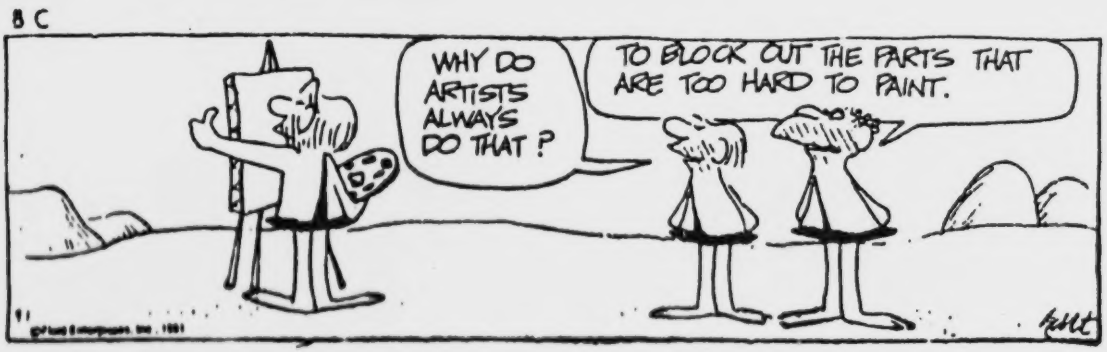
	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
There is a clear written statement of the philosophy and principles of the art education program for the district.	92%	82%
Teachers rely on the art curriculum guide for specific goals and concepts to assure program quality and consistency.	51%	76%

While the district direction is apparent to all, there is some question as to how much of a contribution the guide has played toward this end.

School personnel were also asked about the role of the district art specialist in this regard:

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Teachers rely on the district art specialist for guidance and direction on program goals and objectives.	18%	55%

Teachers find it difficult to conceive how one person can fulfill this role for the thousands of teachers in the district. In interpreting these results, several expressed the belief that a revitalized art lab would be a boon to the specialist toward accomplishment of this intent.



APS Secondary

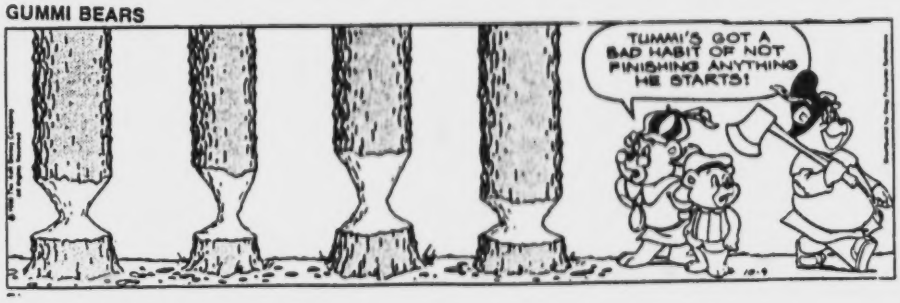
At the secondary level parents, students, teachers and principals were asked to rate each of twelve commonly-mentioned goal areas in terms of their importance. The goals were then ranked for each group, one being the most consequential and twelve being the least momentous:

GOALS
IMPORTANCE RANKINGS

Middle School					High School				
Parents	Students	Teachers	Principals		Parents	Art I Students	Upper Level Art Students	Teachers	Principals
6	7	7	8.5	Improvement of visual perception (and other senses)	6	6	4	4	9
10	9	8	5.5	Enhancement of appreciation of art/design in everyday life	5	10	10	8	6
11	12	12	11	Growth of appreciation of art in history and culture	9	12	12	11	11
7	6	5.5	3.5	Increased confidence in ability to communicate through the production of art objects	11	8	7	7	10
9	4	9.5	12	Future use of skills learned in the world of work	10	5	6	10	12
8	8	9.5	7	Future use of skills learned around home/as a hobby	8	7	9	12	2.5
4	5	3	1	More readily tapping into own creativity	4	2	3	3	4
12	11	11	8.5	Development of an important relationship with an adult (the teacher) as a result of the studio environment and much individualized attention	12	9	8	9	7.5
5	10	4	10	Learning of problem-solving skills	7	11	11	1.5	7.5
2	3	2	5.5	Setting a high standards for self; not merely asking teacher: "Is it good enough?"	3	3	2	6	5
1	1	1	2	Learning to take projects all the way from conceiving an idea through planning and production to completion	1	1	1	1.5	1
3	2	5.5	3.5	Development of an increased sense of responsibility, independence and self-discipline due to the studio approach	2	4	5	5	2.5

The value of art in terms of modeling task planning and completion is prized by all groups. Development of good work habits, high standards, and applications for creativity are other priority features. Perhaps this benefit is what Stanford Professor Eliot Eisner has in mind when he notes that intellectual skills cultivated by art education "not only represent the mind operating in its finest hour but are precisely the skills that characterize our most complex adult life tasks."

GUMMI BEARS



The low rankings of appreciation of art history/cultures diverge from State Department and Getty Report thinking. The inclusion of the eighth item listed--development of an important relationship with an adult--probably needs a bit of explanation. Whether the evaluator arrived for visitations before 8:00, during lunch, or even after school, he was amazed to find that some students were often "hanging out" in the art room. A few "just wanted extra time to work on (their) project," but many sought additional personal contact with the teacher. While this happens to some extent in all classes, it was deemed to be so frequent in art that it should be looked upon as more than incidental.

Teachers and principals were also asked whether they would support more consistency of art goals across the district.

Percent Responding Yes				
Middle School			High School	
Teacher	Principal		Teacher	Principal
65%	85%	Would you endorse more consistency in the goals of art programs from school to school?	72%	88%

About two-thirds of the art teachers and almost nine-tenths of the principals would approve of an effort toward uniformity in the goals of the art program across the district.

"Yeah, it's a beautiful day, but I really prefer black-and-white."

Delivery of Service

Elementary Level

In his Commentary in the Albuquerque Journal last spring, Richard Cook put it bluntly: "New Mexico has legislated art out of the elementary school classroom. In the back to basics curriculum set forth by the 1986 Legislature, the arts were set aside as a frill." Art is not required in the primary grades (1-3). In grades 4-6, about four hours per week are available for "other subjects" such as art, music, physical education, health and computer literacy. As Cook summarizes: "So, if a good teacher understands the importance of art and has developed the skills to teach it, she may get in an hour or so per week." Regrettably, however, many of our teachers do not have "the skills to teach it." Art is no longer a requisite in the teacher preparatory curriculum. On an open-ended question asking what improvements teachers would suggest, more than half of the respondents took the time to comment: "I need more assistance from, or teaching by, an art specialist/itinerant."

Lest all the blame for cutting back on art be saddled on the New Mexico Legislature, however, it should be noted that art instruction has been losing ground all over the nation for quite some time. In the April, 1985, issue of Curriculum Update, an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) study documented that the 1500 principals responding reported an average of 67 minutes per week of art instruction at the fourth grade level. Only fifty-five percent of the fifth grade teachers in our sample indicated that "adequate time for meaningful art instruction is scheduled each week." Although parent and student percentages for "regularly scheduled art instruction each week" at the fifth grade level were similar—59% and 56%—the advisory committee for this study was incredulous. Members felt that the true percentage would be far lower. Given a choice of two of the following problems as most vexing, note how the classroom teachers reacted:

Percentages of Teachers Choosing Selected Problems
As One of Their Two Greatest Concerns

Lack of parental, community interest, support	9%
Unruly or apathetic students	21%
Lack of administrative interest, support	21%
Not enough time for all subjects	100%
Not enough ideas for art activities	49%

It was unanimous! Clearly, time for art is the number one predicament. "Ideas," as certified above, is another major dilemma. Classroom teachers and principals were asked if they feel that the teachers can manage art instruction.

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Students should be provided with art instruction by certified art instructors.	89%	86%

As of this fall, nine states in this nation specify that there must be certified art teachers in all schools, grades K-12. It seems apparent that APS elementary school personnel believe that art requires more than they can currently offer. The lack of prior training is certainly a major factor. In addition, please consider these responses:

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Teachers are provided adequate time to plan, prepare supplies, and gather resource materials.	13%	34%
Adequate instructional supplies, materials and tools are available to implement instruction in art.	40%	52%

Even if adequate time were available and more classroom teachers were trained to teach art, the lack of appropriate planning time and resources would be real obstacles.

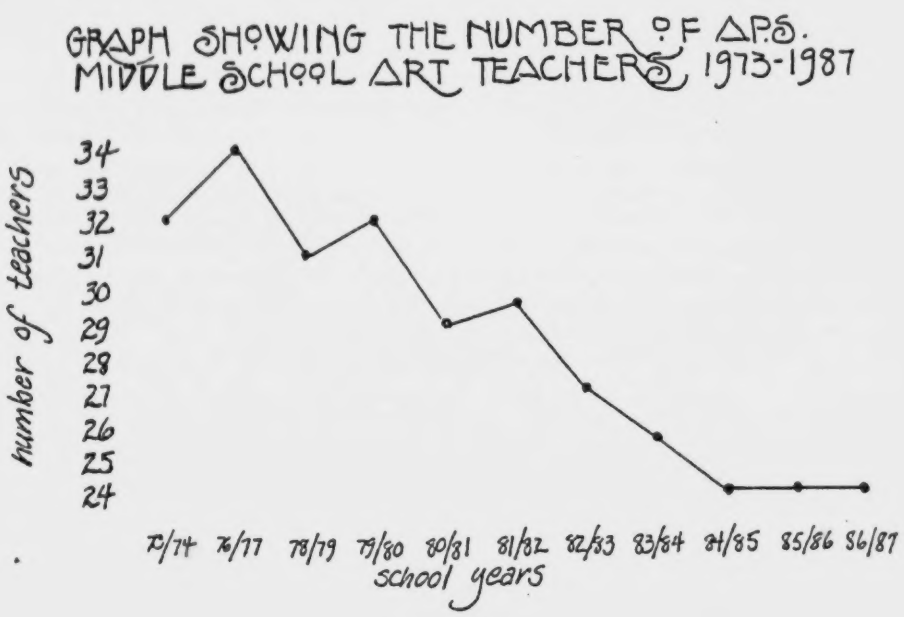
Two additional supportive efforts should be noted here. APS has promoted art in the elementary schools via itinerant teachers since the 1979-80 school year. The project began with three instructors and was extended to six in 1982-83. The elementary itinerant art teacher provides intensive inservice to the classroom teacher as well as instruction to the students. The program's purpose is to prepare the classroom teacher to teach a complete, well-balanced art program. Principals must request an itinerant art teacher for their school. The school is then placed on a waiting list until its turn arises. Currently the art teachers are assigned to one school on a full-year basis and, thus, it is estimated that schools will receive an itinerant's services once every twelve years. An evaluation of the project in 1983 was extremely positive, but it showed that 84% of the classroom teachers surveyed felt that "one semester is insufficient to implement a well-rounded art program to elementary school students."

Another program, entitled "Art in the School," began at five elementary sites in 1985-86. Organized by Sara Otto Diniz, a local parent and art historian, it aims to train volunteer art guides to go into the classroom and facilitate six discussions during the year. Each presents five art reproductions organized

around a theme (e.g. line, color, surface, composition, art genre, various schools of art). Art in the School also provides each classroom teacher with a follow-up activity to reinforce the lesson learned in the presentation. Five more sites were added for 1986-87. About thirty parent volunteers have attended each of the training sessions this year and are using the APS art lab extensively. Since these parents offer their services to their neighborhood schools only, however, distribution of the program is not socio-economically balanced within the Albuquerque community.

Middle School

Currently, at the middle school level, most APS schools require one nine-week course in art as part of the sixth grade exploratory arts block. There is usually an opportunity for students to select art as an elective in seventh and/or eighth grade. Elective opportunities have been dwindling in the middle school curriculum, however. Recent analyses of Senate Bill 106 intimated that there may soon be opportunity for only a total of seven semesters of electives throughout the entire three years. Positions for art teachers have also declined dramatically:



Although there is one more middle school today, there are only 70% as many art instructors as there were in 1976-77, ten positions having been cut since then. Several principals are looking for multi-certified teachers now, hoping to use less than a full slot for art instruction, while adding sections of other subjects. Even currently, with full-time art teachers at most sites, the average-sized middle schools require three of the art teacher's six instructional periods for the exploratory arts course. In other words, in these schools there are only about 75 openings available per semester for seventh and eighth grade students who would like to take an art elective. At the larger schools, with yet an additional section of exploratory arts needed, it is difficult to schedule in more than two sections (50 students) of art electives per semester.

Middle school parents, students, teachers, and principals were asked their reactions to this information:

Which of the following best expresses your reaction?

	Parents	Students	Teachers	Principals
This is appropriate. No change is needed.	59%	45%	40%	53%
APS should encourage students to spend <u>less</u> time in art.	7%	12%	5%	0%
APS should encourage students to spend <u>more</u> time in art.	34%	43%	55%	47%

While the majority of parents and principals favor no change, about one-third of the parents and a little more than two of every five students think there ought to be more time for art. Approximately half of the school personnel would like to see more time for art.

There are advantages and disadvantages of the middle school exploratory arts approach. Both teachers and principals begin by lauding the concept of exposure to art for all students. They add that the opportunity to "check out" a wide range of topics within the discipline and the success-orientation of the offering are true pluses.

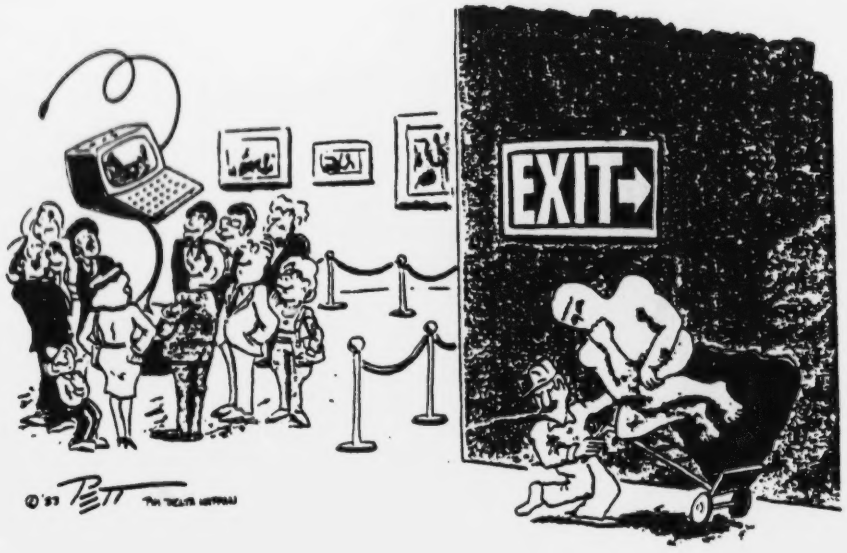
On the negative side, about one-third of both groups began by saying "nine weeks is too short," although three teachers pointed out that for those students less interested in art, enthusiasm is easier to sustain over just 45 days. Teachers went on to say that the exploratory arts block results in large classes with little opportunity to get to know students "before the next horde comes through." Most middle school art teachers are seeing between 200 and 300 sixth graders each year in their exploratory arts classes alone. This does not include the other hundred, or more, elective students. Other complaints about the current middle school scheduling approach are:

1) It creates the impression for some students that art only <u>warrants</u> nine weeks.

2) It splits sixth graders away from seventh and eighth graders and leaves them with less exposure to more mature ideas and work habits.

3) It often leads to "clumping" large groups of special education students into one class.

Principals point out that exploratory classes are very expensive. They also note the behavior problems that develop as a result of some students' displeasure over the block being mandatory.



High School

For classes entering high school prior to 1986-87, the State Department of Education requires one credit (two semesters) of fine arts (art, music or drama) or practical arts (industrial or business education, home economics or computer science) for graduation. Roughly one-quarter of the current APS high school students take an art class while they attend high school. During the first semester of 1986-87, 3,096 students were enrolled in high school art classes; this represents 12.6% of the total high school population. A breakdown, by grade, follows:

APS 1986-87 Enrollment in Art Classes by Grade - Fall, 1986-87

Freshmen	Sophomores	Juniors	Seniors
709 (22.9%)	956 (30.9%)	748 (24.2%)	683 (22.1%)

While relatively equal numbers of ninth, eleventh, and twelfth graders take art, significantly larger numbers of tenth graders are enrolled.

For comparison sake, during the fall semester of 1980-81, 5,137 high school students, or 19.4% of the total population, were registered in art. Thus, over the past six years, enrollment has declined about 35% or more than 2,000 students per semester! Does decreasing enrollment cause a falling off in staffing, or has diminished staffing brought about the dip in enrollment? Like the chicken/egg controversy, a case can be made for either side. At some sites, decisions were made prior to registration to reduce art offerings and, thus, staff. At others, insufficient sign-ups generated the cutback on art teachers. The following graph illustrates the change in the number of APS high school art teaching positions over the past thirteen years.

GRAPH SHOWING THE NUMBER OF A.P.S. HIGH SCHOOL ART TEACHERS 1973-1987*

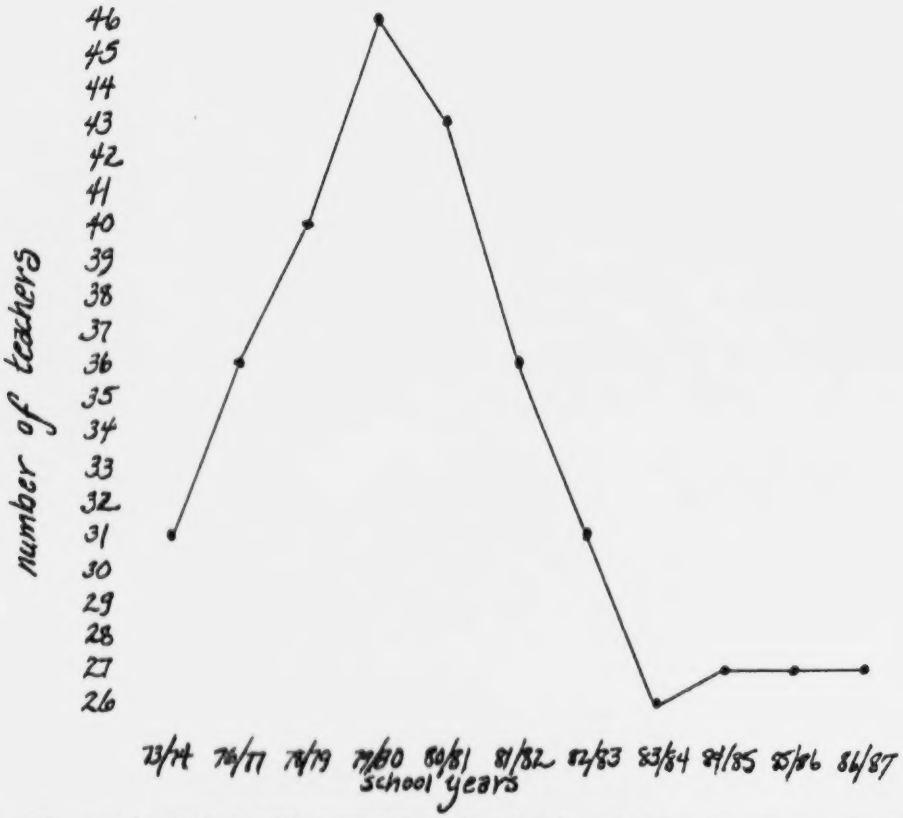


*Figure includes all comprehensive high schools (La Cueva in 86-87) plus Albuquerque Evening School, Freedom High School and School on Wheels.

The loss of nineteen teachers since 1979-80 represents a 41% reduction in instructors.

Here are the reactions of those surveyed about the current availability of art:

	Parents	Art I Students	Upper Level Art Students	Teachers	Principal
This is appropriate. No change is needed.	38%	41%	40%	0%	42%
Fewer students should be encouraged to take art.	0%	4%	8%	0%	0%
More students should be encouraged to take art.	62%	55%	52%	100%	58%

More than half of every group expressed the belief that more students should be encouraged to take art in high school; all teachers responded in this way. Yet, despite the desire for more art at the secondary level, middle school and high school art teachers repeatedly voiced the concern that a real art program at the elementary level ought to be the district's number one priority for this discipline.

Content

Elementary School

What about the actual content of art offerings at each level?

What do the parents and pupils feel that students should learn in elementary school art? The following lists represent the most frequent responses to this inquiry on the survey. In this chart, and similar ones that follow, numbers in parentheses indicate the tally of persons framing a like response to an open-ended question.

What should elementary students learn in art?

Parent Priorities	Student Priorities
To use different media (76)	Drawing/sketching (262)
Art history (57)	Painting (131)
About colors (52)	Art history (76)
Self-expression (48)	How to make things/stuff (53)
To use imagination, creativity (38)	Ceramics (44)
How much fun art can be (35)	How much fun art can be (23)
About other cultures (24)	Coloring (22)
Art appreciation (22)	How to understand/appreciate art (19)
Drawing (18)	Creativity (17)
Visual perception (17)	Weaving (16)

All of the following media are introduced by at least some of the art itinerant teachers. In fact, only photography, architecture, and urban (or environmental) design are not included by more than half of the responding art itinerants. The following percentages indicate how often each of these media is covered in the classrooms of our sample fifth grade teachers:

Percent of Fifth Grade Teachers Employing Each Art Form/Concept

Drawing	98%
Painting	87%
Basic Design	67%
Collage	67%
Weaving, stitchery	51%
Mixed-media 2-D	51%
Lettering, commercial art	44%
Ceramics	33%
Sculpture	29%
Printmaking	29%
Architecture	9%
Jewelry	4%
Urban or environmental design	4%
Photography (still)	4%
Batik	4%
Enamelling	2%

All itinerant art teachers report giving explicit instructions regarding materials and tool handling practices. Eighty-five percent of the fifth grade teachers agree that this is a regular part of the elementary art program, while 76% of the principals concur.

Are art history and appreciation a part of APS elementary art instruction? Fifty-two percent of the parents and fifty-one percent of the students agreed with the statement: "Children discuss pictures and other art objects by famous artists." Sixty-one percent of the fifth grade teachers and seventy-nine percent of the principals concurred that, "Whenever possible, art history and appreciation is related to, or infused with, art-making activities."

The three groups of school staff were asked whether there is a need for an art curriculum scope and sequence to establish continuity in the district K-12 program:

Percent Agreeing to Need for Art Scope and Sequence

Art Itinerant Teachers	100%
Elementary Principals	94%
Fifth Grade Teachers	82%

Those concerned with the elementary school art program clearly would support the development of a scope and sequence to serve as a general framework for the district program.

Middle School

The middle school curriculum guide lists these areas of study under the heading of sixth grade cognitive teaching concepts: drawing, sculpture, and painting. Eight kinds of drawing are enumerated, however, with 70 different activities suggested. Similarly, three forms of painting are outlined with 19 proposed exercises and six categories of sculpture, including 33 projects. Considering that the exploratory arts segment lasts only 45 days, it is evident that there is more material set forth than can be covered. Indeed, many middle school art teachers listed "freedom to develop own curriculum/put together own curriculum within scope of guide" as their favorite aspect of the program.

The middle school guide suggests eight units for elective offerings to seventh and eighth graders, with different levels of activities building on prior art experiences. Drawing, painting, and sculpture are continued, while composition and perspective, graphics, ceramics, jewelry and textiles, fabrics, and leather are to be introduced. A few middle schools have branched off with their own creative offerings (e.g. computer graphics).

High School

At the high school level, all students choosing the visual arts prior to the spring semester, 1987, were supposed to start out with a semester or full year of Art I. It is intended as a "basic art course which offers the students an overview of most of the major areas in arts and crafts. . . . it may include: drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics and/or weaving." The course outline goes on to say that Art I deals with design and its elements and

principles (color, line, texture, form, space, pattern, harmony, balance, rhythm and emphasis). Some high schools have been making individual exceptions for this course as a prerequisite to the rest of the art curriculum; others were waiving it entirely. The survey of upper level art students revealed that only three of every five had taken Art I. Of those who had taken Art I, 77% felt that it had helped them to do better in their upper level course(s). Of those who had not, 54% felt that they might have performed better had they taken Art I.

Students currently enrolled in Art I were asked why they had taken it:

Reasons for Enrolling in Art I

I was interested in taking an introductory course in art.	49%
I had to take Art I so that I could get into an upper level art course later on.	21%
I was "placed in" Art I because there weren't very many other electives open when I registered.	8%
Other (please specify)	22%

While about half of the students desired an introductory course in art, many did not. Nevertheless, 87% reported that they felt that taking Art I had helped them develop a basic knowledge of art that would be useful to them in more advanced classes/work. School personnel were asked for an opinion regarding the necessity of Art I as a prerequisite:

Should the district maintain its guideline regarding Art I as a prerequisite before a student may enroll in an upper level art course?

Percent Agreeing

Teachers	71%
Principals	67%

While about two-thirds feel that the requirement is a good idea, there is also a sizeable group opposing it. These individuals are concerned that, with a limited number of art instructors, advanced classes are being pruned since many teaching periods must be devoted to sections of Art I. Some propose a waiver procedure, by individual, that involves a review of the student's work (portfolio) and/or an interview. Others suggest keeping to the guideline only for ninth and tenth graders, or not for certain forms of art that may not depend upon Art I concepts as much (e.g. photography). As a result of the discussion emanating from the evaluation, the new High School Curriculum adopted during November, 1986, makes Art I "recommended" as preparation for students going on to upper level courses. There are, however, many art teachers who would strongly support this summary statement from one of their colleagues: "All students should be well-grounded in the fundamentals so that in the specialized classes students may move on into creative problem solving."

What does the high school art curriculum look like beyond the introductory course? Virtually all of the schools have chosen to offer a hierarchy within a few media, rather than a greater variety of entry level courses "that go nowhere." In fact, Art II, an overview that follows up on several media introduced in Art I, is being offered at only one site. The chart below summarizes the number of high schools offering each level of each medium.

Number Of Comprehensive High Schools (of 11) With These Courses in Fall, 1986

Medium	Course Levels		
	I	II*	III*
Ceramics	4	1	2
Crafts	3	1	0
Jewelry	2	2	2
Textiles	0	0	-
Weaving	0	0	-
Drawing & Painting	11	6	7
Watercolor	0	0	-
Commercial Art	4	2	-
Filmmaking	0	-	-
Lettering	1	1	-
Photography	8	4	2
Printmaking	0	-	-
Sculpture	2	-	-

*A blank (-) indicates that this level is not contained in the Art Program sequence in the APS High School Curriculum.

Drawing and painting remains the most widely offered field, while textiles, weaving, watercolor, filmmaking and printmaking have disappeared entirely as separate courses within the APS curriculum. Whereas Jewelry I and Ceramics I were each being offered in 90% of the high schools in 1981-1982, only 18% now offer an introduction to jewelry and only 36% retain ceramics. Only photography has grown, with one more school offering the introductory course now, and the same number of intermediate and advanced level sites. Independent or advanced study in arts/crafts, beyond what is shown above, is also available at five high schools.

It should be noted that, despite the great disparity in offerings among schools, the district is succeeding in offering a wide variety of art courses. Program personnel maintain that the same competencies and goals are being addressed, even if the media are quite different at each site. School personnel were asked whether some additional standardization is in order in this regard.

Do you feel that art course offerings at the secondary level should be consistent from school to school?

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Middle School	56%	71%
High School	36%	39%

While middle school personnel would be somewhat more supportive of more uniformity, many of them would also argue that teacher and student skills and interests, as well as each school's facilities and equipment, must be taken into account. It is posited that, at present, there are great discrepancies in these regards that would prohibit effective standardization of offerings. As one teacher articulated, "Teacher creativity/talents vary so widely that gearing to the lowest common denominator would severely hamper the inspired and resourceful teaching currently going on at several sites."

Methods, Materials, Facilities and Support

Elementary School

It has already been demonstrated that a shortage of time is the greatest obstacle to teaching art at the elementary level. Documentation of budget and preparation problems was also introduced. The following survey responses from fifth grade teachers confirm these concerns and add facilities to the list:

What problems about your art program most concern you? (Check two only)

	TEACHERS ONLY *
Inadequate space, equipment, storage	36%
Inadequate budget, supplies, resources	54%
Not enough planning, preparation time	33%
Classes too large	18%
Art class periods too short	0%
Too many other areas to teach	59%

*Please note that on items like this, which encourage more than one response, percentages will add up to more than 100%.

Before focusing on these problems, a brief look at the methods (and the implied intent) of the elementary art program is in order. The most prevalent approaches among elementary classroom teachers when instructing in the visual arts include the following:

Which statement best describes what you do? (Check one)

	TEACHERS ONLY
Make sure each student feels free to experiment, take risks	56%
Make sure students know I'm aware of their effort, progress, achievements	23%
Get students involved cooperatively, solving problems, sharing discoveries	19%
Set high standards, let students know I expect the best	2%

Unlike mathematics, where 2 + 2 equal 4, teachers allow students to employ a multitude of solutions in art. Creativity and self-expression are fostered. Does this mean that "anything goes," that no values are applied at all? No, about two-thirds (69%) of the classroom teachers affirmed that "teachers give constructive criticism of students' work."

The respondents were also asked which of the following special features advocated in the State of Ohio's art curriculum they employ:

Which will you have in your art program this year? (Check all appropriate)	TEACHERS ONLY
Open classroom activity centers	38%
Field trips to museums or galleries	31%
Team teaching, art with academic subjects	31%
Major art exhibit or art festival	29%
Local artists/visits or exhibits at school	24%
Parents serve as art program volunteers	22%
Team teaching, visual arts with other arts	20%
T.V. or news reports on art program	18%
Workshops or classes for parents, administrators or teachers	9%
Fund-raising event for art program	4%
Field trips to studios of local artists	2%
Sponsor art club	0%

Not a single one of these features can be found in at least two of every five APS elementary schools. An attribute of quality art programs that APS does seem to subscribe to is, "provision. . . for the recognition of students' creative efforts through displays, exhibitions and publications." Ninety percent of the fifth grade teachers, and every one of the elementary principals vouched adherence to this forte. While only 29% of the teachers indicated (above) that there would be a major art exhibit or festival at their own site during the school year, 82% of the teachers, and all of the principals, indicated that "the students' art has been represented in art shows (Area/Central office, State Fair, etc.) this year."

How is the art program developed in APS elementary classrooms? Teachers and principals were asked to respond to the following five statements:

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Art teaching plans are prepared with objectives and activities clearly identified.	68%	60%
The locally developed art curriculum guide is used to assist in planning a developmental program.	65%	88%
Teachers share art ideas, materials and methods.	82%	98%
Teachers are encouraged to develop innovative approaches to teaching art.	72%	96%
At least one staff meeting each year, involving all the teachers in the school, is devoted to the topic of art instruction.	29%	47%

While teachers feel encouraged to be innovative with their art lessons, they are virtually on their own in terms of obtaining assistance. Good lesson plans are not always available.

An overall look at the variety of elementary level approaches, however, is encouraging. Please consider these responses:

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
The art curriculum in my classroom/school includes the following features:		
a. A wide range of media.	82%	82%
b. Design elements and principles.	72%	73%
c. Different art styles.	91%	86%
d. Diverse themes in art.	77%	88%

It is impressive to see <u>what</u> has been included in the minimal time available to art; <u>how</u> it is merged in is extremely interesting. One advantage of having a single teacher responsible for all subjects in the classroom is that there is more possibility for various disciplines to be integrated with one another. As will be shown later, art instructors at the secondary level have a difficult time "blending" with other subjects.

To what extent is art integrated into other subjects at the elementary level?

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
The art program in my school reinforces other academic subjects.	78%	90%
The art curriculum guide suggests ways in which art may be used to reinforce instructional units for each grade level.	88%	91%

It is apparent that elementary school personnel are committed to integrating art with other subjects. The questions of how often and with what subjects were addressed in the following three items.

How often do you integrate art into academic subjects? (Check most appropriate one)	TEACHERS ONLY
Regularly, part of my basic philosophy	48%
Occasionally, when the art doesn't get lost	28%
Frequently, to stimulate creative thinking	21%
Rarely, not knowledgeable enough	2%
Rarely, not that valuable or essential (usually)	2%
Rarely, not appropriate at my grade level	0%

Which subject do you integrate most frequently with art? (Check one only)	TEACHERS ONLY
Creative writing	49%
Social studies	27%
English/language arts	15%
Science	5%
Mathematics	5%
Health/physical education	0%

Check the art forms you relate to the visual arts most frequently. (Check two)	TEACHERS ONLY
Creative writing	80%
All of the senses - see, hear, touch, motion, etc.	55%
Literature/poetry	38%
Music/sound	10%
Theater/acting	10%
Dance/movement	5%

Approximately two-thirds of the fifth grade teachers in this sample integrate art into academic subjects on a regular basis. Only four percent rarely do so. Such linkages occur most frequently with creative writing. Hindsight prompts a regret that "vocabulary" was not inserted on a survey item. It has become apparent that elementary art is often incorporated into language lessons.

Now that it is known how art is included in the elementary curriculum, it is important to establish its resources and lines of support. Earlier, it was noted that many of those surveyed feel that adequate instructional supplies, materials, and tools are not available. Is there no budget for these needs?

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
The school has a set budget to order art materials and supplies.	65%	39%

Only about one-third of the principals see specific funds as earmarked for art. It is possible that the reason more classroom teachers say that there is a budget is that they, themselves, delineate an amount of their classroom supply money for art. Are classrooms better equipped for certain media than others?

A variety of two and three dimensional art materials and tools are available for all students to use for the following:

	TEACHERS ONLY
Drawing, painting and collage	88%
Ceramics	58%
Print making	45%
Sculpture	41%
Fabric design	22%
Jewelry design	15%

While teachers feel supplies are adequate for drawing, painting and collage, very few can easily obtain what is needed for fabric or jewelry design.

CALVIN & HOBBES
CAN I HAVE SOME CLAY?
HELP YOURSELF. THIS STUFF'S IMPOSSIBLE TO WORK WITH.
THANKS.
I'VE GOT A PRETTY GOOD BOWL OR SOMETHING GOING HERE.
IT STARTED OUT AS A PHANTOM JET, BUT IT SORT OF SQUASHED, SO NOW I THINK IT'S A BOWL.
MMM. THAT'S VERY GOOD.
YEAH, I'M REAL PLEASED WITH IT.

Here is what elementary staff had to say about the availability of teaching resources:

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
The following resources are available for the study of art criticism and history:		
Slides, reproductions, and replicas	39%	63%
Original works of art	31%	44%
Books and magazines	56%	82%
Filmstrips and films	65%	81%

While the need for art and art replicas is greater, many teachers also could use more materials about art.

Almost all elementary art instruction is provided in the same classroom that houses the rest of the subjects. How is that working?

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
The following facilities are provided for art instruction:		
Classrooms large enough for art instruction	36%	48%
Storage space for supplies, visual resources, and student work	40%	42%
Sink	64%	73%
Large work tables to accommodate a full class	23%	21%
Ceramic kiln (working)	88%	90%
Adequate lighting	78%	85%
Teaching area that is not carpeted	63%	73%

Adequate lighting and working kilns seem to be the highlights of the facilities and equipment picture. Size of work areas--tables and classroom space--is the most pervasive problem.

Principals and classroom teachers feel very positive about the support they receive from art itinerant teachers, when it is available. Planning the art program is greatly expedited during the year that the itinerant is at the school. They just wish that the assistance were more long-lasting.

Questions were asked about the interest and involvement of parents in the elementary art program.

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Parents in our community are receptive toward the art program	79%	94%
	Parents	Students
Parents get involved in the students' art program.	52%	43%

More than four-fifths of the school personnel feel parents are supportive of the art program. About half of the parents and students think parents are involved in elementary school art.

Is art mentioned during parent-teacher conferences? According to sixty-five percent of the principals, and fifty-five percent of the teachers, the pupil's progress in art is discussed. The surveys inquired as to whether teachers are well-equipped to evaluate student progress in art:

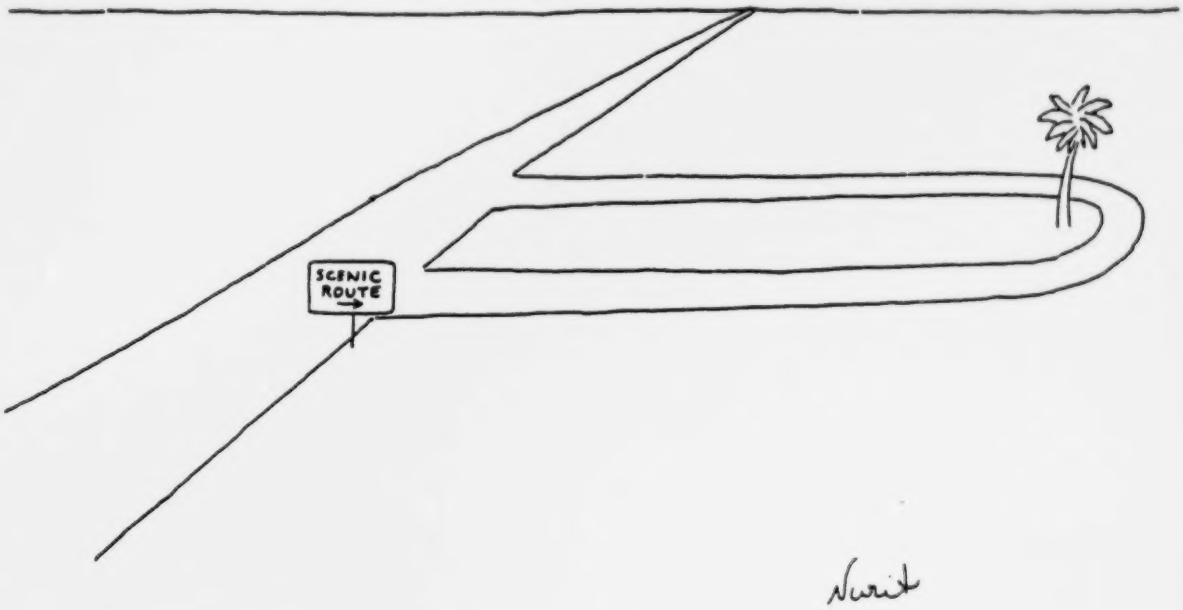
	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Parents
Effective techniques have been developed to evaluate student progress in achieving the objectives in art.	43%	50%
Student progress reporting in art is based upon the following criteria:		
	Teachers Only	
Ability to discover personal ideas	76%	
Ability to transform ideas creatively	83%	
Ability to work media skillfully	67%	
Ability to describe, interpret, and judge art	34%	
Awareness of art in society and how people react to it	39%	

Clearly, there are some reservations about our elementary school teachers' ability to pinpoint student progress in art. Assessments of creativity and personal discovery by classroom teachers are probably quite subjective.

Finally, what are the roles of others in the elementary art program?

	Percent Agreeing	
	Teachers	Principals
Support for the art program is given by the school and district administration.	83%	83%
Professional artists and other art resources such as museums and galleries are used to supplement the instructional art program.	50%	77%

While there is satisfaction regarding the part played by administrators, there is room for improvement in the schools' use of community resources to supplement the instructional art program.



Secondary Level

Despite their differing delivery systems, middle school and high school art personnel chose to look at the same issues, with common questions, regarding methods, materials, facilities and support. A priority issue for both levels is the size of classes. The following chart illustrates the current situation, as described by the art teachers. The perceptions of principals at both levels were almost identical.

	Size of Class, Second Semester, 1985-86			
	Smallest Class		Largest Class	
	Range	Mean	Range	Mean
Middle Schools	12 to 25	19	25 to 39	27
High Schools	7 to 30	19	20 to 45	32

The numbers, themselves, are not alarming, except at the extremes. The insertion of large numbers of Special Education students into certain sections, however, is problematical. Individualized projects and attention, in addition to guided practice, are essential to a good art program, as well as to Effective Teaching. These opportunities are diminished when several additional pupils, needing special attention of their own, are added to the group. Although many special education students do quite well in art, teachers wonder whether there is a general impression among those who influence student registration that "anyone can handle art." Or is it simply that art seems "safer" than industrial arts or vocational electives? In any case, this topic was fraught with so much emotion that the following question was posed:

What is your judgment as to the instructional effectiveness of current Special Education mainstreaming into art classes?

	It's Going Well	Mixed Reaction	It's Going Poorly
Middle School Teachers	21%	47%	32%
Principals	25%	50%	25%
High School Teachers	8%	58%	33%
Principals	24%	76%	0%

At least three-quarters of each group have some reservations. Principals point out that the Special Education students are not receiving the amount of structure needed, especially in large classes. Several suggested that if there is to be extensive mainstreaming into art, extra funding is needed for teachers (pay them an increment to teach during their preparation period). Teachers at both levels would like to see a formula whereby Special Education students are weighted for pupil/teacher ratio purposes. They also feel they need more information as to who are the Special Education students and what are the problems and suggested instructional strategies. They propose that, if these students continue to be "clumped" into certain sections, Special Education teachers or aides be utilized during art instruction in order to make it work. Cleveland Middle School has piloted a co-teaching plan to include Special Education teachers in all exploratory areas, and the staff at that site is very enthusiastic about its merits.

Other groups of students are also topics for discussion at the secondary level. The evaluator was astonished at how frequently and readily the term "dumping ground" was applied to the art program. School personnel were polled as to how prevalent this practice actually is:

To what extent are students being placed in your art program who might not choose art on their own (i.e. art as a "dumping ground")?

	Not At All	A Little Bit	A Lot
Middle School Teachers	11%	68%	21%
Principals	44%	56%	0%
High School Teachers	4%	68%	28%
Principals	28%	67%	6%

While more teachers than principals reveal concern about this issue, it must be noted that more than three-fourths of the respondents indicate that at least "a little bit" of dumping is transpiring. When asked what the effects of such enrollment practices are, discipline problems were cited repeatedly. As one principal explained: "Dissatisfied students can be very disruptive in this open environment." The "overload" of less motivated, less academically-oriented students prevents interested students from learning as much, too. In some cases, the turned-on students cannot get into art classes because the slots are filled already by the less motivated. While some teachers and principals admit that this practice is occasionally beneficial, because previously uninterested students have become excited about art, they would like to see steps taken to curb it. It is especially damaging when students are enrolled several weeks after the course begins.

During the initial visitations, several teachers and principals voiced some regard about the efficacy of the current delivery system for "gifted artists." The following question was asked on the survey:

Should there be any additional provisions, such as fine arts magnet centers or schools, for "gifted artists?"

	Yes	Uncertain	No
Middle School Teachers	79%	—	21%
Principals	72%	—	28%
High School Teachers	56%	16%	28%
Principals	41%	—	59%

Several of those who would like to see more done for the artistically talented suggested using the Career Enrichment Center for that purpose. Those who disagreed either wondered whether the cost would be prohibitive during times when art is not otherwise faring well in the budget, or expressed concern about siphoning away the "stars" of the current art program.

To what extent are curriculum/course guides used by secondary art teachers? Only 25% of the middle school teachers replied "often;" the figure was 8% at the high school level. Fifteen percent of the middle school teachers said "not at all," while the figure was 44% among the high school instructors. Do the teachers see any need to develop more useful art curriculum guides? Both groups were almost

split in half on this issue. Many teachers report that they have developed their own personal guides over the years. Many others, however, feel that a manual that is more specific, with more extensive instructions and options, is needed. Several urged that the emphasis should be on processes and concepts for students to learn, not on products (the objects that students make). Committees of art teachers have been meeting with the art specialist during the 1986-87 school year to begin revising curriculum guides.

Inservice programs are, of course, another means of assisting the teachers with methodology. Three survey questions for secondary teachers focused on differing kinds of opportunities for exchanging ideas:

Would more opportunity for articulation among feeder schools' art teachers have a positive effect on student learning?

	Yes	Not Appreciably	No
Middle School Teachers	60%	35%	5%
High School Teachers	75%	25%	0%

Would more opportunity for art teacher visitations to view peers in action have a positive payoff on student learning?

	Yes	Not Appreciably	No
Middle School Teachers	75%	20%	5%
High School Teachers	84%	16%	0%

Would other kinds of inservice programs have a positive effect on student learning?

	Yes	Not Appreciably	No
Middle School Teachers	50%	39%	11%
High School Teachers	67%	29%	5%

Despite some negative comments about the few inservice sessions scheduled in the past, there is strong support for such endeavors in the future. Although the delivery system tends to make art a rather intermittent process for most students, many teachers feel that it is important to plan the curricular flow more intelligently. They are not overly concerned about repetition, however, since there is usually such a big gap of time between art experiences. Opportunities for exchange among teachers within the district, especially on site, have been the most worthwhile activities, according to the teachers. "Other kinds of inservice" was most often interpreted as bringing in outside speakers, and, while there is certainly some support for those kinds of sessions, they are deemed somewhat less valuable by the teachers.

Three other possible internal sources of planning support were addressed by the surveys. The district art lab, in flux in recent years, was a topic that generated much discussion. On a firmer financial base in prior terms, it has been forced to change sites a couple of times over the past few years and has continued operations largely through volunteer services. Although its primary function has always been to support the largely untrained (in art) elementary teacher population, its usefulness to secondary art teachers had waned appreciably. The following question was posed to them:

Should there be a central repository for teaching resources (e.g. a revitalized Art Lab?)

	Definitely	Perhaps	No
Middle School Teachers	58%	42%	0%
High School Teachers	75%	21%	4%

There is evidently a great deal of advocacy for the art lab concept. In what ways would teachers use such a facility? While more than a dozen functions were mentioned, the following list of missions represents those itemized by at least ten teachers.

The art lab should serve as a place:

1. To view/borrow resource materials and project samples.
2. To attend workshops/obtain new skills.
3. To store supplies and teaching aids (especially A-V materials and one-of-a-kind tools or machines).
4. To discover new teaching ideas/see demonstrations.
5. To locate research on art education (an art professional library).

Much effort has been expended this fall by the district art specialist to revitalize the art lab in this manner.

Perhaps the most controversial support issue is that of the art coordinator position. When the last coordinator left the district near the beginning of the 1985-86 school year, applications were taken for the post, but it was never filled. This left one art specialist for grades K-12. During the budget crunch, the coordinator position was formally eliminated. A visiting professor from the University of Iowa affirmed the evaluator's observation last spring that many art teachers sound like Rodney Dangerfield, bemoaning the fate of being the only subject without its own coordinator. The reorganization of the Curriculum Center has changed the situation somewhat, as there is now a supervisor for the fine arts. Since it was such a big issue last spring, however, it is still appropriate to look at some survey results.

Does the art program in APS need the services of a coordinator?

	Yes
Middle School Teachers	87%
Principals	47%
High School Teachers	88%
Principals	37%

The teachers who met to help interpret the results found the principals' equivocal reaction to be "insulting." They pointed to the following list of functions which had been generated from survey responses and asked how these roles would be performed in the future and what would happen to the art program if they were not.

Respondents' List of Services For Which They Felt A Coordinator Is Needed

1. As an art advocate within the district and the community.
2. To coordinate art shows.
3. To research and inject new ideas.
4. To promote consistency and equity across schools.
5. To coordinate inservice.
6. To help obtain good tools and supplies.
7. To monitor district goals.

While each of the above areas is being addressed, to some extent, during 1986-87, it is deemed unrealistic to expect that the entire list can be fully achieved by one specialist.

A final area of internal support to be scanned was administrative backing for art:

Is administrative support for art satisfactory?

	Yes	Somewhat	Not At All
Middle School Teachers	42%	42%	16%
Principals	84%	16%	0%
High School Teachers	40%	52%	8%
Principals	84%	16%	0%

While several teachers consider administrators responsible for the program cutbacks, some point out that they realize that their principals have tried to back them and keep art afloat. Such support has often come as a result of the art department making express efforts to contribute services profusely to the rest of the school program. In any case, there are a great many teachers who

believe that administrators do not place enough value on art, that its image is that of a frill. A few principals acknowledged that they need more orientation as to art's educational contribution and its appropriate place in the basic curriculum.

This issue of updating/improving art's image, in the community as well as within the district, was mentioned continually during the initial site visits. To try to establish how high a priority efforts along this line should be given, questions were included in the teacher and principal surveys.

How important is it to update/improve art's image in the district?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Middle School Teachers	95%	5%	0%
Principals	58%	37%	5%
High School Teachers	100%	0%	0%
Principals	39%	50%	11%

How important is it to update/improve art's image in the community?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
Middle School Teachers	84%	16%	0%
Principals	47%	47%	6%
High School Teachers	100%	0%	0%
Principals	39%	50%	11%

Virtually all art teachers, as well as most principals, consider this issue to be important. Some teachers expressed real disillusionment over the apparent lack of effects of previous efforts. Across most of the nation, community image of art has been on the decline. Just over the two years between Gallup polls, in 1981 and 1983, the percentage of respondents indicating art should be required plummeted to below 20%. As Eliot Eisner interprets it, people tend to assign less status to those subjects in which students work with their hands. They legitimate such discrimination by distinguishing between "intelligence" and "talent," claiming that only a small segment of the population should dabble in the latter realm. As for the image within the district, there has been some discussion of addressing the problem through a campaign with the Academy for Educational Leadership (AEL).

One means of ameliorating community knowledge and understanding of the visual arts program would be cooperative fine arts endeavors in an APS art/performance gallery. Teachers and principals were asked whether such a venture would significantly improve the community's image of art. Almost all of the reactions were evenly split between "dramatically" and "somewhat," with several comments along the lines of, "It'd be nice accountability/evidence of our successes." A few respondents, however, indicated that this was but a nice pipedream, reminding that the cost of such an undertaking would be prohibitive.

What about budgeting? What did teachers and principals have to say about the financial support for art?

Is the budget adequate for art supplies at your school?

	Yes	Not Quite	Not At All
Middle School Teachers	63%	16%	21%
Principals	42%	47%	11%
High School Teachers	24%	52%	24%
Principals	18%	71%	12%

While the picture is not satisfactory at either level, there is more concern among high school personnel, despite the fact that virtually all of their art budgets are supplemented by student fees. Principals do see a need for more money, to an even greater extent than their teachers. While the idea of instituting student fees received mixed reviews (at best) among middle school personnel, it is seen as a necessary evil/bother at the high schools. While it is time-consuming and troublesome to collect the fees, high school personnel argue that "they're reasonable since students get to keep the projects" and that "when students are given materials, they waste 'em." There is a great deal of variation in the fee schedules across schools and across courses. The mode is $5 for Art I and $10 for upper level art courses, although many students pay twice that amount. There is also much divergence in terms of budgets provided by the school. In 1984-85 the high school art department budgets ranged from $1,461.50 at one site to $3,600 at another.

Very few textbooks, or other printed materials, were sighted in secondary classrooms. If a well-balanced, discipline-based art education program is to be implemented, some attention will need to be given to this issue during the pre-adoption and adoption years (1986-87 and 1987-88).

To get a general idea of principals' impressions regarding equipment and facilities, the following question was included on the secondary level survey:

While some art teachers decry the outmoded equipment and improper facilities, others bemoan the equipment and facilities "lying fallow" where art programs have been seriously cut back. How do you feel about the equipment and facilities for art at your site?

	Excellent/Adequate	Could Be Better/Bad
Middle School Principals	53%	47%
High School Principals	75%	25%

The cutbacks have enhanced the equipment and facilities picture at most high schools, dividing these resources among fewer classes. A better means of exchanging unused equipment within the district is, nevertheless, called for. At the middle schools, there are fewer examples of prime equipment, or facilities, being inherited by the remaining art program. Maintenance and operations has apparently made a great effort to fix equipment internally, but the lack of a replacement budget has meant a steady decline in the art equipment inventory.

A more specific assessment of APS secondary level art equipment and facilities is available from the Annual Program Reports produced by the former art coordinator in the spring of 1985. Four or five areas of each school's facilities were judged according to prescribed standards (e.g. space assessed according to 1981 Fire and Life Safety Guidelines). The following table summarizes the results.

Evaluation of APS Art Facilities, Spring '85

	% Inadequate Space	% Inadequate Storage	% Inadequate Sink Area	% Inadequate Kiln Area	% Inadequate Photography/ Dark Room
Middle Schools	11%	28%	50%	33%	—
High Schools	75%	75%	88%	63%	67%

Many schools' facilities needed upgrading, especially among the high schools, to be considered adequate.

Each school also took an inventory of its standard items on the APS minimum equipment list. It was estimated that the total cost of minimally equipping ten district high schools was $535,859 and that APS would need to spend $77,245 on new equipment to achieve those standards. A cost analysis was not prepared for the middle school inventory, but documentation does exist as to the equipment needed by the various schools to achieve standards.

As for other assistance, is APS making suitable use of community art resources (artists, galleries, museums, etc.) within its programs? Only 17% of the middle school teachers and principals answered with a definitive "yes;" the figure was less than 5% for the high school personnel! The two biggest impediments are transportation money and student/teacher "release time" for field trips. Bringing artists and suitcase exhibits to the schools is probably a more practical approach. The art specialist has committed himself to exploring these avenues during 1986-87.

Effectiveness

"Art is the strange activity of considering life by making things."

Sign spotted at the entry to a particularly engaged high school classroom.

Two factors make it extremely difficult to measure the effectiveness of the APS art program at this time, other than subjectively. One has already been mentioned—the diversity of goals and objectives being addressed throughout the district. Until there is more consensus about, and adherence to, common purposes in our art instruction, attempts at objective assessment will be unproductive. The second aspect is the limited development of evaluation instruments for right-brained activities. The entire September/October, 1986 issue of Design for Arts in Education is devoted to the topic: "CONTROVERSY - Testing: Peril or Parity?" Strong arguments are presented, both pro and con, but the local upshot is that whatever tests APS might presently borrow or produce would both inaccurately inform the community about program accomplishments and deceive it as to instructional intentions.

Thus, while there is no question that increased attention needs to be devoted during the next curriculum development cycle toward better accountability in the visual arts, we presently can rely only on constituents' opinions of the program's efficacy.

Elementary School

At the elementary level, pleasure from art was a prime consideration about which feedback from parents and students was desired.

My children/I enjoy art instruction in this school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	41%	54%	3%	2%
Students	63%	29%	6%	2%

Ninety-five percent of the parents feel that their children are enjoying elementary art, while 92% of the students report pleasure during art instruction. The program appears to be successful toward this end.

The parent and student surveys asked for one other assessment:

Students learn about history and different cultures through the study of art in our school.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Parents	18%	46%	23%	13%
Students	33%	43%	15%	10%

About two-thirds of the parents and three-fourths of the students see this occurring, but the evidence is not nearly as overwhelming as it is regarding enjoyment. As mentioned earlier in this report, parent volunteer programs are just getting underway at a few sites to make sure that art history/culture/appreciation are infused into the curriculum.

Elementary teachers and principals were asked to gauge effectiveness toward other specific objectives of their art programs:

The art program in my classroom/school provides learning experiences which help children:	Percent Agreeing Teachers	Principals
To creatively express personal ideas/feelings with art media	100%	94%
To understand both the historical and cultural context in which art is created	60%	65%
To describe works of art	66%	63%
To analyze works of art	44%	60%
To interpret works of art	49%	55%
To sharpen their perception of aesthetic effects in nature, in man-made environment, and in works of art	90%	88%
To foster non-verbal communication.	91%	90%
To nurture imaginative thinking	100%	90%
To sharpen analytical skills vital for higher-order mental tasks	78%	69%

There is near unanimity regarding the program's success in nurturing creative expression, sharpening of perception, non-verbal communication and imaginative thinking. The program is judged least successful in art analysis and interpretation.

These conclusions are confirmed by the teachers' responses to one additional question:

Which statement best applies to your art program? (Check one only)	TEACHERS ONLY
Develops openness to new ideas, originality, imagination	55%
Builds perceptual skills and abilities to use media	24%
Nurtures awareness of the uses of art in everyday life	17%
Presents a good foundation in design elements and principles	5%

The development of creativity and imagination seems to be the major outcome of the elementary art program.

All groups were also asked, through an open-ended item, to name the best features of the elementary art program. The students tended to single out specific media; therefore, their favorite aspects are not listed below.

Most Preferred Aspects of the Elementary Art Program

Parent Priorities	Teachers	Principals
Variety (19)	How art is being integrated with other subjects (9)	Creativity is being promoted (7)
Nurturing of creativity (13)	Creativity is being promoted (9)	The students love art (4)
Displays/art shows (12)	Virtually every child is experiencing some success (6)	The effort put forth by teachers (4)
That student make things without critical analyses (10)	Art is a relaxing, fun time (4)	The displays in our building (4)
That students get <u>some</u> exposure to art (9)	It's enjoyable for the teacher (3)	Annual arts and crafts fair (3)
Opportunity for self-expression (8)	The variety of activities (3)	The variety of activities (3)
		How art is being integrated with other subjects (3)
		The flexibility/growth of the art program (3)
		The itinerant program (3)
		The inclusion of art history/ culture (3)

Creativity

"D'yer ever feel you're on the verge of an incredible breakthrough?"

What changes are called for by each group?

Suggested Improvements for the Elementary Art Program

Parent Priorities

Create a true art program (37)
More emphasis/at least weekly art class (33)
More art teachers/one for each school (34)
(More) art history (16)
Greater integration of art into the "basics" (15)
Better art training/support for elementary teachers (11)
Teach students how to draw (9)
More parent volunteers/involvement (8)

Student Priorities

More/regular time for art (223)
More/better supplies (159)
More art teachers/one for each school (148)
Have a real art program/art classes (141)
More equipment (87)
More displays/contests (19)

Teacher Priorities

Need more assistance from/teaching by specialist/itinerant (23)
Better availability of supplies (8)
More money for supplies (6)
Improved facilities/space (5)
Workshops for classroom teachers (4)
Give art more stature/time; not see it as a frill (3)
Need more materials for teaching art appreciation/history (2)

Principal Priorities

Need more itinerant art teachers (30)
Need intensive inservice for classroom teachers (9)
More money for supplies (7)
Different rotation of itinerant art teachers (4)
More space for art activities/storage (3)
Less pressure re CTBS scores; it causes us to downplay the fine arts (2)
More integration of art with other subjects (2)

Middle School

As stated earlier, the primary goal of the exploratory arts segment is introducing the students to the elements and principles of design. Ninety-one percent of the students indicated that the course succeeds in this intent.

All four survey groups were asked to rate the effectiveness of the total middle school art program towards accomplishment of each of the twelve aforementioned goals. Responses are listed in the following table:

Ratings of the Middle School Art Program's Effectiveness Toward Twelve Goals

Scale: 1 = Not At All
2 = Some
3 = Very Much

Goal Descriptors (As Appeared on Survey)	$\bar{X}$ Effectiveness Ratings			
	Parents	Students	Teachers	Principals
Improvement of visual perception (and other senses)	1.99	2.20	2.63	2.32
Enhancement of appreciation of art/design in everyday life	1.97	2.17	2.41	2.38
Growth of appreciation of art in history and culture	1.63	1.96	1.95	1.91
Increased confidence in ability to communicate through the production of art projects	1.94	2.21	2.58	2.26
Future use of skills learned in the world of work	1.94	2.28	2.26	1.85
Future use of skills learned around home/as a hobby	2.06	2.27	2.47	2.35
More readily tapping into own creativity	2.08	2.24	2.68	2.56
Development of an important relationship with an adult (the teacher) as a result of the studio environment and much individualized attention	1.68	2.05	2.55	2.06
Learning of problem - solving skills	1.93	2.04	2.73	2.03
Setting of high standards for self; not merely asking teacher: "Is it good enough?"	1.96	2.25	2.66	2.21
Learning to take projects all the way from conceiving an idea through planning and production, to completion	2.19	2.34	2.78	2.35
Development of an increased sense of responsibility, independence and self-discipline due to the studio approach	2.01	2.22	2.63	2.03

Interestingly, parents' ratings are lower than any of the other groups for all but one of the goals. Parents, teachers, and students feel most positive about the way students are learning to take projects from idea to completion. Principals feel best about the way students are more readily tapping into their own creativity. The only goal which receives a less than "some" effectiveness rating is "growth of appreciation of art in history and culture." Principals also display some concern about the program's impact insofar as future use of skills learned in the world of work.

Middle school personnel were queried about the controversial "goal" mentioned earlier in this report: aiding learning in other subjects.

In what way(s) does art complement the rest of the middle school curriculum?

Teachers	Principals
Adds to modalities for learning (5)	Feeling of success carries over to other subjects (2)
Provides "hands-on" social studies experiences (2)	Development of planning skills, time management and self-discipline also carries over (2)
Reinforces math (2)	
Enhances reports (2)	

While they feel there is some carryover between the concepts learned in art and lessons in other disciplines, secondary teachers and principals admit that there is certainly not an optimal amount of integration of art with other subjects at this juncture.

Do students enjoy the visual arts segment of the exploratory arts block? Survey responses to this issue were collected from both them and their parents:

Which of the following statements best describes your feelings about the art segment of the exploratory arts block?

	Students	Parents
Art is this student's favorite subject.	16%	8%
Art is among the most enjoyable middle school subjects for this student.	41%	40%
This student likes art about as much as any other subject.	32%	26%
This student does not like art class very much.	6%	20%
This student dislikes art class more than any other subject studied in middle school.	5%	6%

While students are more affirmative than their parents, both viewpoints are quite positive. Teachers were quite pleased to learn that 57% of the students like art more than most other classes, while only 11% dislike it more than most.

Just as with the elementary and high school samples, all four middle school groups completed the survey by answering open-ended questions regarding what they liked best about the program and what improvements they would suggest. The most-often recurring responses are printed on the following page:

What aspects of the APS middle school art program do you like best?

Students

Working with clay (249)
Drawing (146)
Painting (83)
"Making things" (42)
Pleasant environment (31)
It's fun (26)
The teacher (23)

Parents

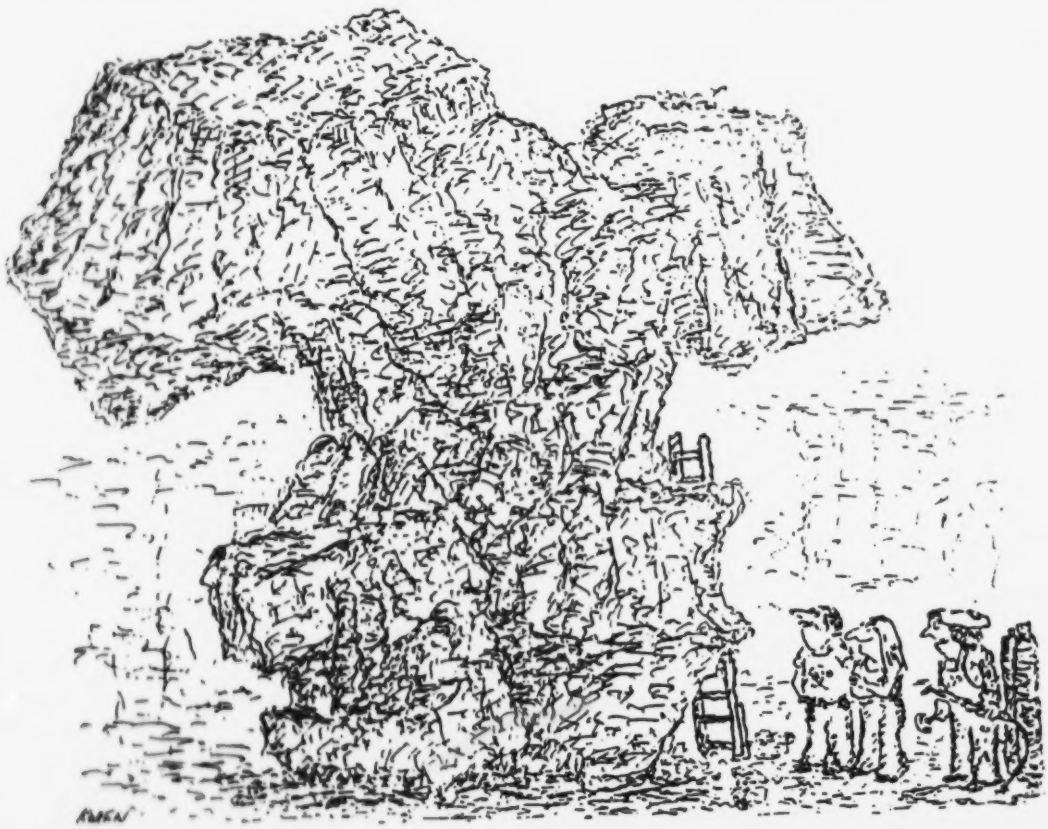
Creativity (21)
That it's required/exploratory arts approach (12)
The teacher (11)
Variety (9)
Ceramics (8)
That it's an elective at my school/not required (7)
Drawing (6)

Teachers

Each teacher teaching what he/she does best/freedom to develop own curriculum (5)
Sequential elective offerings (2)

Principals

Required exploratory/introductory approach (4)
Success for many students not doing well academically (3)
Opportunity for student self-expression (2)



"Is it too cutesy?"

What improvements would you suggest for the APS middle school art program?

Students

More time in art (211)
More/better supplies (85)
More projects/variety (64)
More ceramics (37)
Better activities/freedom to make what we want (26)
More equipment (21)
More drawing (20)

Parents

More time in art (23)
Better provisions for talented/interested students to have more art (18)
Better teachers (17)
Smaller classes/more individual attention (9)
More art appreciation (8)
More variety (6)

Teachers

Enhancement of elementary art program (6)
More offerings in high school (4)
Make middle school art requirement a full semester (4)
More emphasis on community awareness and participation (3)
More interdisciplinary projects/units (2)
Better supply selection in warehouse (2)
No more cuts! (2)
Continue exploratory arts approach in middle school (2)

Principals

More money for supplies (4)
Improve quality of teachers (3)
Provide more teacher inservice(2)
Update equipment (2)
Offer more alternatives/ courses (2)

Perhaps the most notable favorable aspect is the number of students singling out their art teachers as the highlight of the program. As for the recommendations, please observe the number of students and parents coming up with "more time in art" without any prompting!

50 "You moved."

High School

All groups, including both levels of art students, rated the program's effectiveness toward each goal:

Ratings of the High School Art Program's Effectiveness Toward Twelve Goals

Scale: 1 = Not At All
2 = Some
3 = Very Much

Rating Goal Descriptors (As on Survey)	$\bar{X}$ Effectiveness Parents	Art I Students	Upper Level Art Student	Teachers	Principals
Improvement of visual perception (and other senses)	2.25	2.11	2.30	2.50	2.24
Enhancement of appreciation of art/design in everyday life	2.32	2.08	2.26	2.34	2.50
Growth of appreciation of art in history and culture	1.88	1.82	1.94	2.02	2.00
Increased confidence in ability to communicate through the production of art projects	2.13	2.12	2.22	2.62	2.22
Future use of skills learned in the world of work	2.07	2.26	2.47	2.38	2.22
Future use of skills learned around home/as a hobby	2.40	2.24	2.45	2.44	2.50
More readily tapping into own creativity	2.30	2.24	2.36	2.68	2.39
Development of an important relationship with an adult (the teacher) as a result of the studio environment and much individualized attention	1.89	2.04	2.06	2.64	2.36
Learning of problem - solving skills	1.79	1.84	1.97	2.60	2.14
Setting of high standards for self; not merely asking teacher: "Is it good enough?"	2.30	2.25	2.39	2.44	2.22
Learning to take projects all the way from conceiving an idea through planning and production, to completion	2.46	2.25	2.41	2.70	2.64
Development of an increased sense of responsibility, independence and self-discipline due to the studio approach	2.23	2.14	2.20	2.46	2.39

Parents, teachers and principals were in agreement as to which goal was being most highly achieved: "learning to take an idea through to completion of a project." This is the same goal that received the highest rating from all middle school groups. Both levels of high school students, however, gave the highest marks to future use of skills learned in the world of work. Interestingly, this was the lowest rated goal among the middle school principals.

As was also concluded for the middle schools, the lowest rated area is growth of appreciation of art in history and culture. The learning of problem-solving skills also received low grades from all but the teachers, who were disturbed over the other groups' responses. Most high school teachers stress that the

challenge of art projects is solving the problems that are continuously generated. Not all, however, use the term "problem-solving" on a consistent basis, and this may explain why students did not recognize the problem-solving that teachers feel is taking place.

Parents and students were also asked about the level of enjoyment of high school art. Here are their responses:

Which of the following statements best describes your feeling about art (so far) in high school?

	Parents	Art I Students	Upper Level Art Students
Art is this student's favorite subject.	9%	20%	27%
Art is among the most enjoyable high school subjects for this student.	62%	46%	50%
This student likes art about as much as any other subject.	21%	27%	19%
This student does not like art class very much.	2%	6%	2%
This student dislikes art class more than any other subject studied in high school.	7%	1%	1%

Again, these results were gratifying to art teachers. While approximately 70% feel art is one of the most enjoyable subjects, only about five percent feel it is one of the least. As would be expected, upper level art students rate art as even more of a favorite than do students in Art I.

Finally, all five groups' responses to the open-ended items, good aspects and those needing improvement, are listed below:

What aspects of the APS high school art program do you like best?

Parents	Art I Students	Upper Level Art Students
Variety (15)	Variety of projects (35)	Variety (28)
How the teacher motivates (11)	The teacher (27)	The teacher (25)
Student responsibility/ self-discipline (10)	Drawing (24)	Atmosphere/environment (19)
Choice (8)	Development of creativity (23)	Freedom to learn/work on one's own (17)
Photography (7)	Freedom to learn/work on one's own (14)	Development of creativity (14)
Studio environment (6)	Painting (13)	Choice (13)
	Learning a lot (9)	Drawing (12)
	It's fun (8)	Accessability of help/ individual attention (9)

Teachers	Principals
Having the opportunity to teach art (5)	Creativity (4)
Each teacher teaching what he/she does best/deems necessary (4)	Teacher/student relationships (3)
Seeing what's happening for some students (3)	Teacher dedication (3)
Variety of upper level courses (3)	Students working together (2)
The 1986 Metro Youth Art Exhibit (2)	Quality work orientation (2)
	Art displays and competitions (2)

What improvements would you suggest for the APS high school art program?

Parents

More supplies (11)
Urge more students to take art, especially freshmen (10)
Offer more advanced classes (9)
More/better equipment (7)
Don't cut offerings (6)
Give art more status (5)

Art I Students

More supplies (44)
Better supplies (21)
More choice (12)
More advanced/better projects (10)
Greater choice of art classes (8)
More art teachers (7)
More/better equipment (6)
Smaller classes (5)
Cleaner rooms (5)

Upper Level Art Students

More supplies (48)
New/better equipment (14)
More art offerings (11)
Better supplies (10)
More choice (10)
Better facilities (9)
More time (7)
More teachers (7)

Teachers

An art coordinator (6)
More money for art (6)
Enhancement of elementary art program (5)
Restoration of high school art staffing (5)
More emphasis on community and administration awareness of art (5)
Require one fine arts credit for graduation (4)
Smaller classes (4)
Equalization of staffing, supplies equipment and facilities (4)
Develop/improve show places (4)
Provide more for the artistically gifted and talented (2)
Provide more art instruction in the middle schools (2)
Strengthen our "recruiting campaigns" for art students (2)

Principals

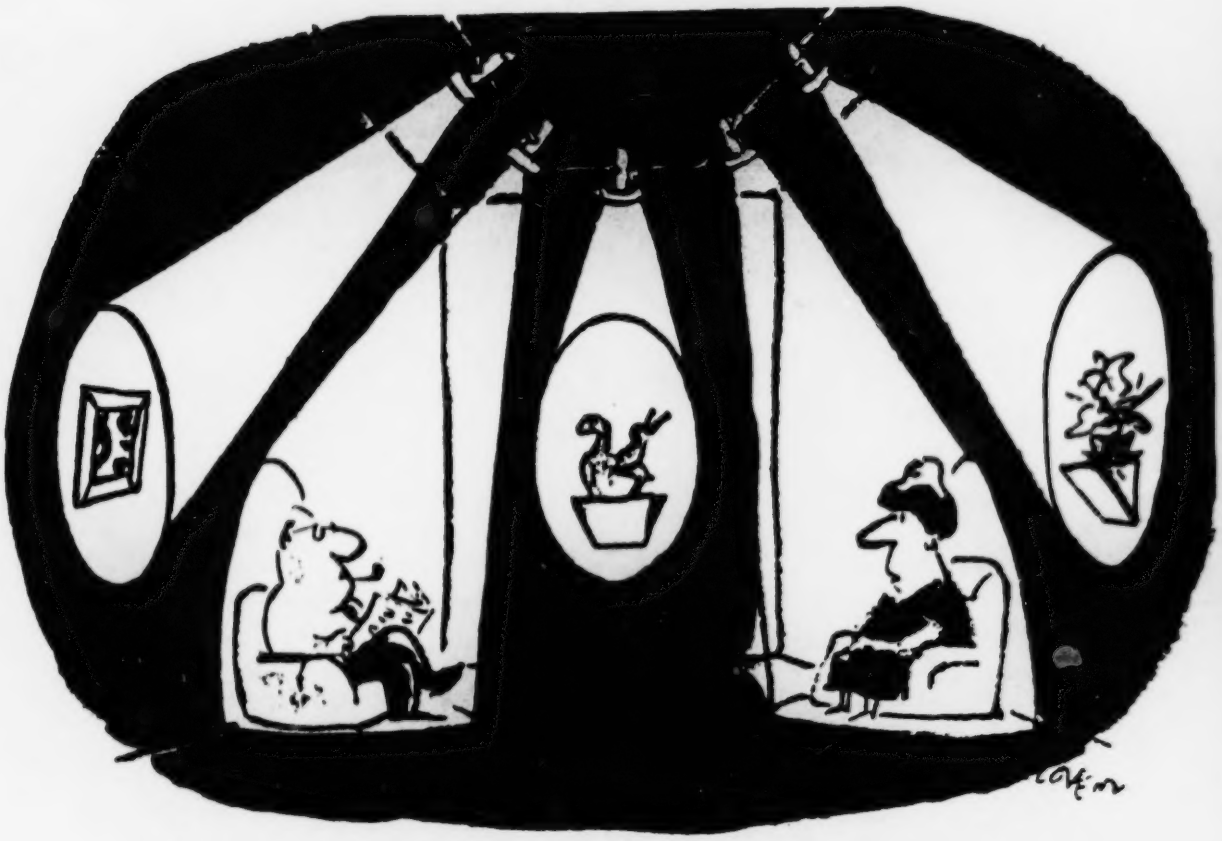
Update equipment (4)
More money for supplies (3)
Improve facilities (3)
Get more students enrolled in art (3)
Educate the public about our art program/the value of the fine arts (2)
Better teachers/staffing (2)
Consider two-pronged approach: art for the artist and art appreciation for the rest (2)

Among parents and both groups of students, the variety of media and projects available in the APS high school art program is its most appealing feature. They, and the principals, too, see the teachers as a big plus. Teachers feel that teaching art, in the way they see fit, is a very positive experience.

As for suggested improvements, more and better supplies and equipment was a priority for all groups. More art offerings, and more choice of projects within the courses, was also a popular response.

In addition to their yearning for an art coordinator, high school art teachers, like their middle school colleagues, would unselfishly opt for a greater emphasis on art in the elementary schools, even if it meant fewer advances at their own level.

Assessing a program's merits through anecdotes is, of course, dangerously subjective. This evaluator is compelled, however, to conclude this section by sharing one experience that widened his eyes to the effects of the APS art program. Late one dreary afternoon, nearing the end of a long trail of visitations, he happened upon a lone student and a custodian hidden away in the bowels of a high school art department. It became apparent, during the course of the conversation, that neither the janitor nor the student held much fondness for the bulk of their high school "ordeals." Yet the two were actually engrossed in the student's art project, so the evaluator asked what was different about art. The custodian animatedly nodded his head in agreement as the student explained, "This is the class in which I finally get to use my mind, to express what's in it. Without art, I couldn't possibly appreciate the everyday things around me. With it, I'm a lot better off than most people." When he left a little while later, the evaluator was a bit less comfortable than he had been before with his own lack of art education.



"Arthur, I think I liked our little nest better before we put in track lighting."

Conclusion

According to the respondents, the most crucial level of concern is the elementary art program. Many students are not currently receiving a consistent dose of well-planned art instruction. Elementary school staff compliment the contributions of the six itinerant art teachers, while vocalizing the desire for more of them.

Although the situation appears less urgent at the secondary level, paranoia pervades regarding art's future. While the nine-week segment of art in the middle schools serves a valuable purpose, many educators would like to ensure that the exploratory arts block does not become the only art experience available for interested young teenagers. High school personnel believe in the need for a well-rounded introductory foundation in the visual arts for many students. Some fear that in-depth instruction for the more committed students in APS will have to be curtailed, however, if the current mandates of SB 106 are implemented and if recent cutbacks in resources continue.

"Thomas Cole!"
"Asher Durand!"
"Frederick Church!"
"John Kensett!"

"Here!"
"Yo!"
"Present!"
"Here!"